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ABSTRACT

This book presents step-by-step guidelines to getting a job. The following are among the topics discussed in the book's 13 chapters: (1) assessing one's salable skills (identifying likes and dislikes, determining strong and weak points, assessing skills and knowledge, identifying areas for improvement); (2) identifying one's ideal job (describing the ideal job, writing 10-year goals); (3) gathering information (developing a networking list, compiling a company list, looking locally and in other areas); (4) creating a winning resume (making a personal information list, writing a resume, preparing a final version of the resume); (5) writing a cover letter (format and content considerations); (6) identifying, requesting, and furnishing references; (7) using want ads and employment agencies (answering ads by phone, in person, and by letter; employment agencies and temporary work); (8) networking and making direct contacts (networking, networking meetings, target letters and direct contacts, phone calls, letters); (9) staying organized (keeping records, making a weekly job search plan); (10) completing an application form (tips for completing applications, illegal questions); (11) interviewing for the job (basic guidelines, dealing with difficult questions, common interview mistakes); (12) getting the best pay and conditions; and (13) succeeding at a new job. Most chapters include sample documents and a job search progress checklist. The workbook contains checklists and activities from Chapters 1-5, 7 and 11. (MN)

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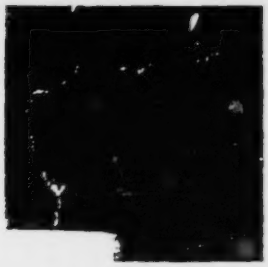

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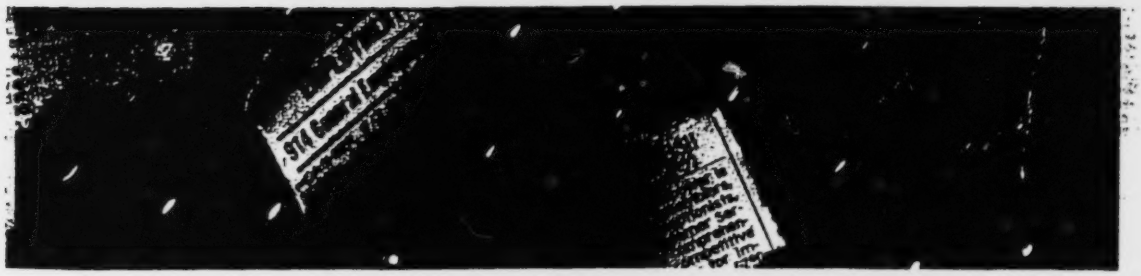
Get That Job!

"In Get That Job! *Jurg Oppliger provides practical, easy-to-use recommendations that just about guarantee you'll land a job. It's the ideal companion for any job seeker."*

— *John D. Drake, Ph.D., author of* The Perfect Interview



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Get That Job!

Jurg Oppliger

New Readers Press

I would like to thank
my wife Barbara for her patience
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and writing this book,
and for her proofreading.
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Preface

Information is power. This quick and easy guide, *Get That Job!,* provides information that can give you more control over your job search. The information can help you plan and carry out your job search more successfully.

Thanks to the following people for their contribution to the content of *Get That Job!:* James Gourley, Pennsylvania New Reader Representative; John Zickefoose, Read Now, Corona Public Library, Corona, California; Joanna Miller, Education Coordinator, Southerners for Economic Justice, Durham, NC; Toni Cordell, New Reader Leadership Coordinator, Laubach Literacy; J. William McVey, Director, Laubach Literacy Center for Workforce Education; Christina Jagger, Director of Acquisitions and Development, New Readers Press; and Judi Lauber, Senior Project Editor, New Readers Press.

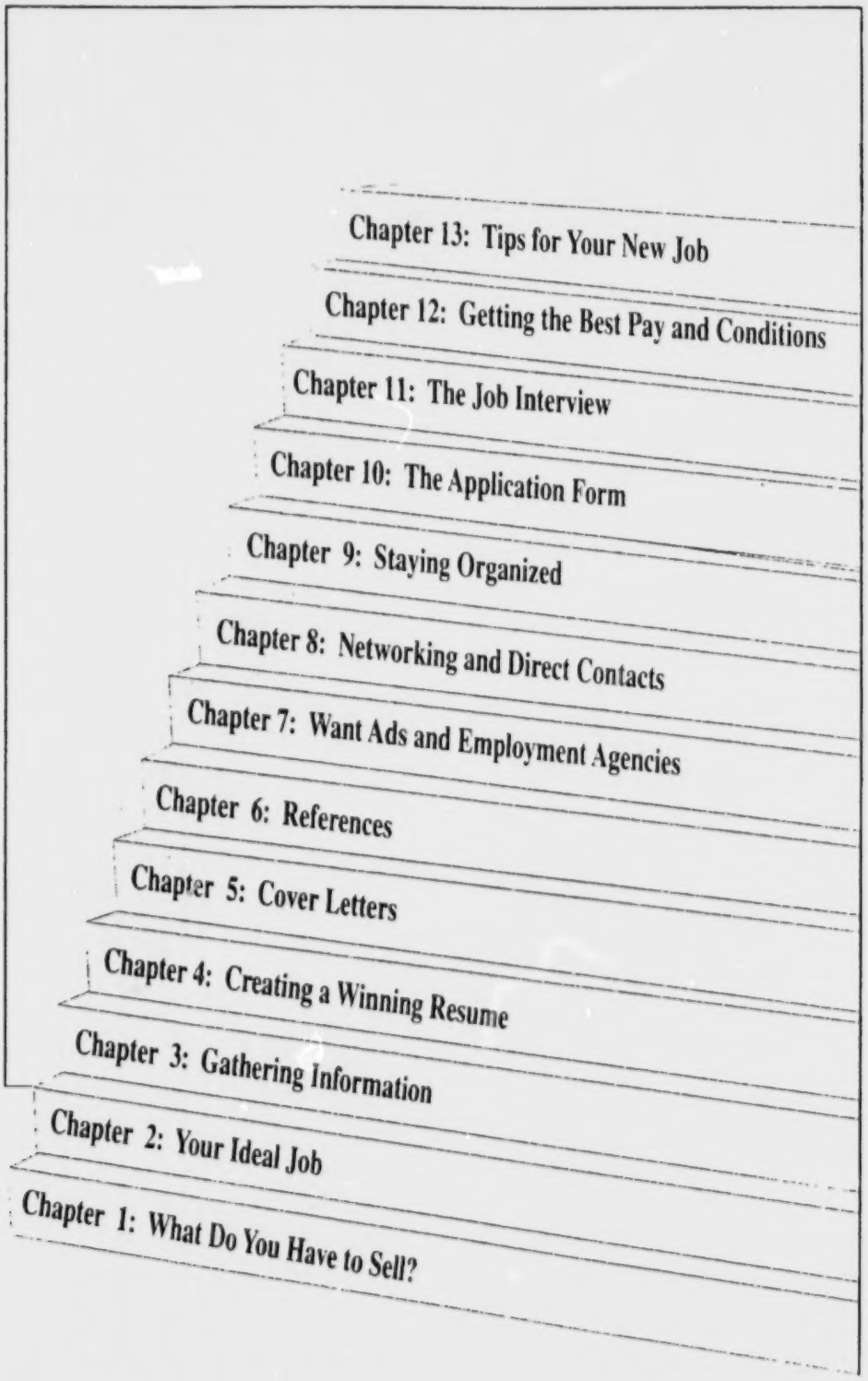
Introduction

You want to find a job. Maybe you want to change jobs. Perhaps you're in school or unemployed. Whatever you're doing now, planning your job search can help you find a new job more quickly. And it can improve your chances of getting a job you like.

This book is for all job seekers. It shows how to use your basic skills and knowledge to find a good job.

If you take the actions this book suggests, you can

- decide what you can do well
- identify your job search goals
- pick the best way to look for the job you want


Chapter 13: Tips for Your New Job
Chapter 12: Getting the Best Pay and Conditions
Chapter 11: The Job Interview
Chapter 10: The Application Form
Chapter 9: Staying Organized
Chapter 8: Networking and Direct Contacts
Chapter 7: Want Ads and Employment Agencies
Chapter 6: References
Chapter 5: Cover Letters
Chapter 4: Creating a Winning Resume
Chapter 3: Gathering Information
Chapter 2: Your Ideal Job
Chapter 1: What Do You Have to Sell?

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- write effective resumes and cover letters
- prepare for job interviews
- find a good job
- get off to a good start in your new job

This book has 13 chapters (see page 6). Each chapter describes one step of a successful job search.

How to Use This Book

You will get the most out of this book if you go through it twice:

- First read it through quickly. This gives you an overview of the job search process.
- Then work through the book more slowly, taking the steps suggested. Each time you see the symbol at right, you can use the sample given as a model for your own list, letter, resume, or other document. Writing these things will help you in your job search.

How Soon Can I Find a Job?

There's no way to know for sure how long your job search will take. It can take a lot of time and hard work.

To succeed, you may have to contact many companies.* The more contacts you make, the sooner you are likely to find a job.

Finding a job also takes luck. If you're lucky, you could find work within a week or two. But for most people, it takes much longer.

Sometimes, 100 people may apply for a single job. Only one person will be hired. That means 99 won't. Be prepared to apply for many jobs before you find the one you want. Don't become discouraged.

This book gives you a recipe for a successful job search. Now, get that job!

* In this book, the word *company* is used to refer to any workplace. It could be a company, an institution (school, hospital, etc.), a small business, or another kind of organization.

Chapter 1

What Do You Have to Sell?

Looking for a job is selling yourself—your experience, your skills, your knowledge, and your ability to work with others. How do you know what you have to sell? Spend some time thinking about these questions:

- What do I like to do?
- What are my strongest points?
- What can I do best? What do I know best?
- What sort of job should I look for?

This is a good way to start identifying your skills. Next, look at some areas in more detail.

What You Like Doing

When you like your job, you'll do it much better and you'll be happier. Consider what you really like to do at work and what bothers or frustrates you.

Think about your most recent job and what you like best and least about it. Maybe you like being proud of your company's product. Maybe you're frustrated because you think your pay is too low. You could also like or dislike

- being in charge
- being part of a team
- being responsible for money
- traveling far to get to work
- making a lot of phone calls
- working unusual or flexible hours

The following questions can help you figure out what you like and want to do:

- What motivates me and makes me proud of my work?
- Do I like to work with people?
- Do I want to work alone or in a group?
- What size workplace suits me best?

- Do I enjoy helping people? Gathering information? Using machinery?
- Do I want to be responsible for other people's work, or just my own?
- Do I want to move to a new area?
- Do I want to work for myself?

Page 13 shows how someone could list job likes and dislikes.

Strong and Weak Points

Think about your strong points. What character traits do you have that an employer may need? Are you a leader? Good with people? Always on time? Your strong points are part of what you have to sell.

You also need to know your weak points, so that you don't take a job you don't like or can't do. What limits the work you can do? Do you need detailed instructions? Do you need quiet to concentrate?

Some qualities might be strong points for one job but weak points for another. Are you a quiet person? That would be a strong point for a library job. But it would be a weak point if you worked selling cars.

Page 12 shows a sample list. When you make your own list, try to include at least six strong points.

Sample Document: Strong and Weak Points

My strong points	My weak points
precise	a little slow
careful	too quick to give in
hardworking	not very active
patient	not a natural leader
reliable	
good team worker	
forgiving	
adaptable	

Sample Document: Job Likes and Dislikes

What I like most in my most recent job:

- talking to customers and helping them make good choices
- displaying products for sale in an attractive way
- helping to choose cosmetics and shampoos to stock

What I liked most in other jobs:

- close relations with the owner and my coworkers
- small size of the salon
- short distance from home to work

What I do not like in my most recent job:

- closing the salon in the evening
- filling out daily tally sheets
- responsibility for cash

What I did not like in other jobs:

- low salary
- being one of many salespeople

Skills and Knowledge

Next, think about the skills and knowledge you already have. Which could help you get a job?

If you're an office worker, your job skills and knowledge could include

- word processing
- knowing several software applications
- accounting
- using the telephone
- setting up filing systems
- running photocopiers and fax machines

When you think about your skills and knowledge, don't limit yourself to what you've done on the job. You may have learned to manage your time well by running a household. You may have learned teamwork by being on a volunteer committee. Maybe you build models as a hobby—you've learned to work neatly and carefully. These skills and knowledge are probably selling points too.

Page 15 shows examples of how a person could list skills and knowledge.

Sample Document:
Skills and Knowledge

I can	I know
restock shelves	common food brands
do inventory control	bar code reading
handle electric and electronic cash registers	Mexican currency
do daily tally sheets	Spanish
train people (as baseball coach)	
do first aid and CPR	
raise children	

When you make your own list, try to include all the specific items you can think of.

Skills and Knowledge to Improve

It's also helpful to know the areas you can build in. What job knowledge do you lack? Are there tasks you have trouble with? What makes you feel insecure on the job?

Page 16 shows a sample list of weak areas in skills and knowledge.

Sample Document:
Areas to Be Improved

I feel insecure when . . .

I have to ask my supervisor for information or help.

I have to use welding equipment.

I bring finished work to quality control.

I plan to . . .

improve my self-confidence, remembering that my supervisor is paid to support me.

find ways to check my work before presenting it.

take classes to improve my welding skills.

When you make your own list, it's helpful to include a plan for improving your weak areas.

Success Stories

By now, you have some idea of what you have to sell to an employer. There's one more factor that can help you go out and sell yourself: self-confidence. If people see that you believe in yourself, they're more likely to believe in you too.

You might want to try writing your success stories. Your success stories can help in three areas:

- They boost your self-confidence and remind you of what you can do well.
- You can use them in your resume to show what you can do.
- You can mention them in job interviews.

It's effective to tell a success story in three parts:

1. The problem: the situation that you faced
2. The action: what you did to solve the problem or change the situation
3. The result: what came out of your action

Here's an example of a success story.

Sample Document:
Success Story

1. Problem

In our manufacturing operation, we shared some tools. It was often a problem to find the tool you needed.

2. Action

I mounted hooks on the wall for all the tools to be hung. Each worker got one metal name tag to be put on the hook when taking a tool.

3. Result

Each worker had only one tool at a time, and the tools could easily be found. We cut out many hours of searching.

Anything you are proud of is worth writing up. Try to think of more than one success story. Think of things you did well in the past. Remember when your boss, your coworkers, or a family member complimented you. Include situations on and off the job.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ made list of job likes and dislikes
- ❑ made list of strong and weak points
- ❑ made list of skills and knowledge
- ❑ made list of areas to improve
- ❑ wrote up success stories

Chapter 2

Your Ideal Job

In Chapter 1, you thought about what you can do and what you like to do. Using that information, you can decide what kind of a job you want.

Try to describe your ideal job. What would make a job perfect for you?

You may not find a job that's perfect in every detail—few people do. But you can compare possible jobs to your ideal. Are they close enough? If not, one of those jobs may not satisfy you. You could soon be looking for work again.

Here is how someone's description of an ideal job might look.

Sample Document: My Ideal Job

Job description:

I want a cooking job. I'd like to work with the head chef at a hotel so that I can improve my cooking skills. I'd like to work mornings and early afternoons so that I can be home with my daughter in the evenings.

Pay:

I need to make at least as much as on my last job. If possible, I'd prefer to make 10 percent more.

Benefits:

- health insurance for me and my daughter
- retirement plan
- two weeks' vacation

Location:

- not more than 40 minutes from my home

Kind of company:

- hotel that is part of a big chain

Other things that are important to me:

- friendly coworkers
- no overtime

Long-Term Plans

Most often, a job search is treated as a short-term effort. You need a job right away so you can pay the bills.

But at the same time, it's good to think ahead. Where would you like to be 10 years from now? Think of both work and personal goals. To get there, what kind of job should you look for now?

Here is an example of someone's 10-year goals.

Sample Document: 10-Year Goals

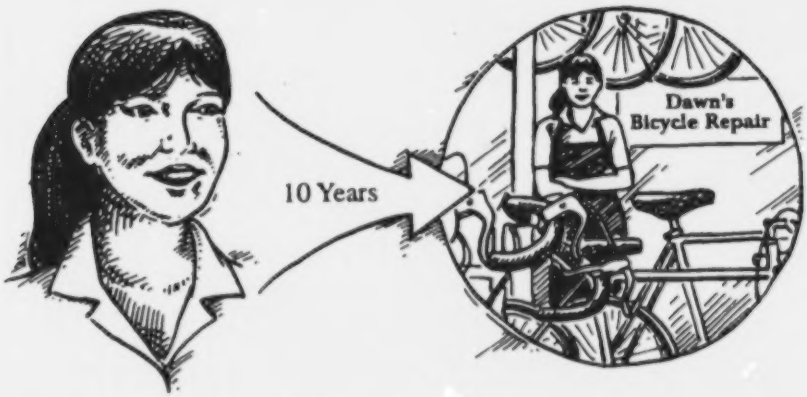
Work goals:

Kind of job:	I want my own bicycle repair shop.
Income needed:	$ 35,000

Personal goals that affect my job needs:

- stay in this area near my family
- be married and have children
- be active in the community
- own my own home

When you write up your own 10-year goals, take your time. Put it aside and come back to it with fresh thoughts. Talk it over with your spouse or partner, if you have one. Make sure your plan can help you both reach the goals you share.



Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ wrote description of ideal job
- ❑ wrote 10-year goals

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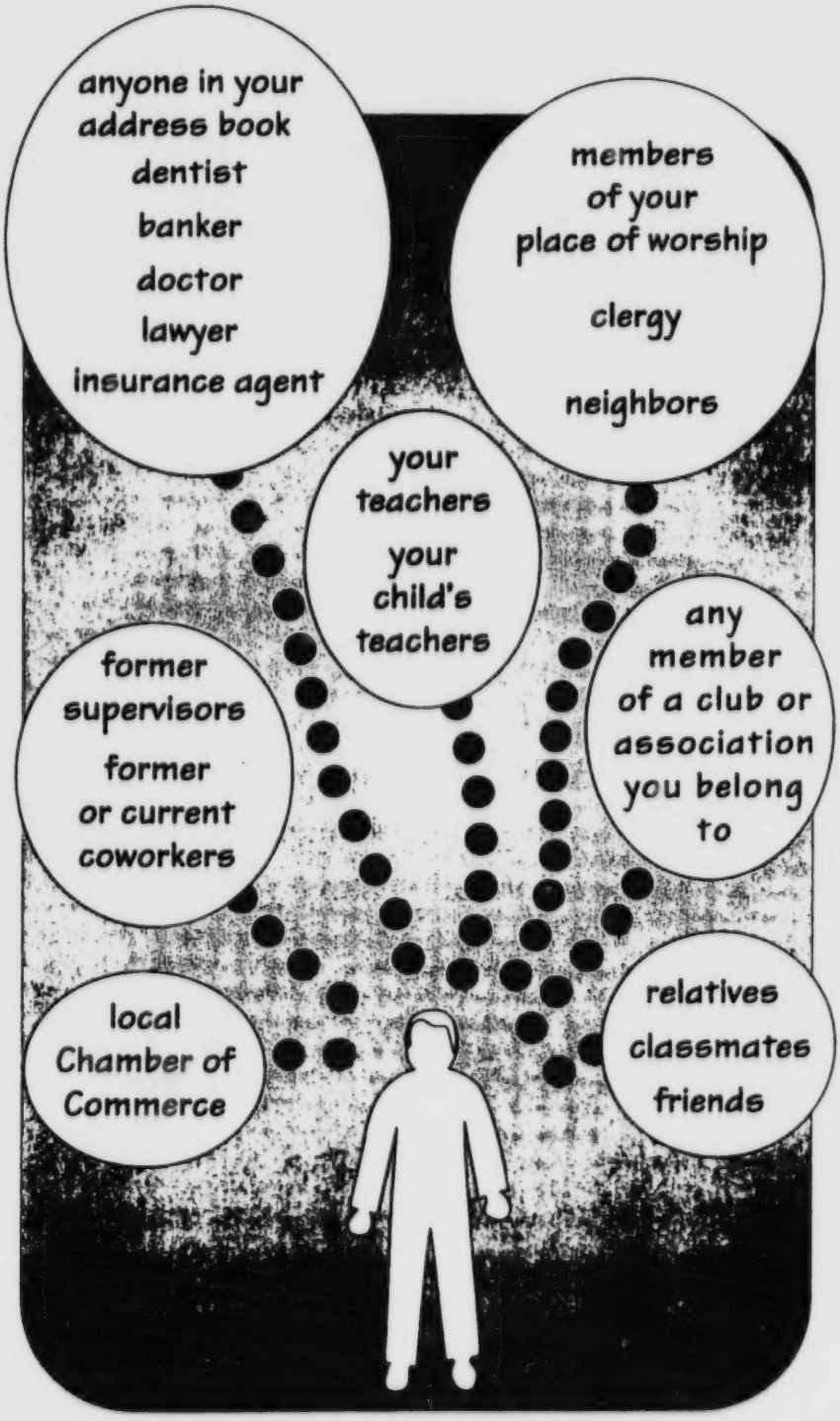
Chapter 3

Gathering Information

You've thought about

- what you have to sell
- your special skills and knowledge
- what you like to do
- what kind of job you want

Now it's time to start networking and making contacts to help you in your job search. It's also time to think about where you might like to work.



Networking

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Networking List

About two-thirds of job openings in the U.S. are never advertised. Instead, employers hire

- people they know
- people who are recommended
- people who ask for a job at the right time

How do you find out about these "hidden" job openings? The answer is networking.

Networking means getting the word out that you are looking for a job. Think about everyone you know who might be a useful contact. Look at the ideas on page 25. List everyone you can think of who could

- recommend you to an employer
- let you know about job openings
- give you information about a line of work that interests you
- give you information about a company that interests you

As you think of people, start writing them down on a networking list. Page 27 shows how part of a list might look. When you make your own list, include anyone you can think of.

Start the list now, and every day think about adding to it. This helps make sure that you don't forget anybody who could help you.

Sample Document:
Networking List

Name	Phone	Notes
Jim Buzzell	555-6543 (home)	wife Heidi, son Peter
Kathy Bardolino	555-7890 (work)	
Bill Smolka	555-5457 (work)	my boss 1985/94
Barbara Chang	555-7873 (work)	head of personnel ABC Company

Company List

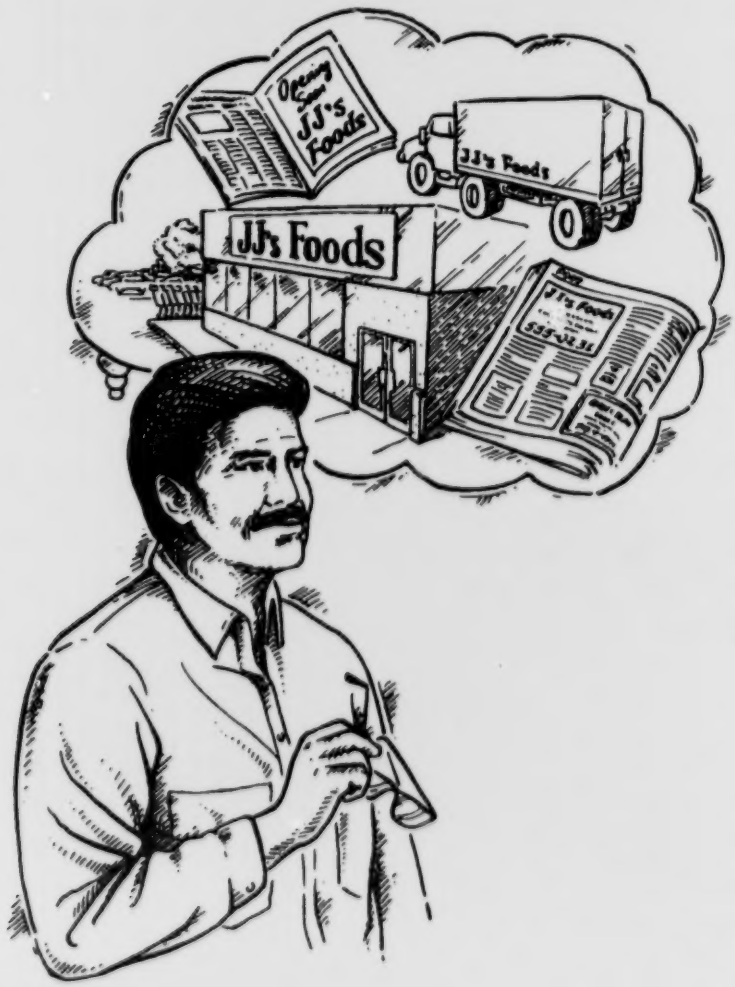
It's also a good idea to start a company list right away. This is a list of companies you think could use somebody with your skills, and that you would like to work for.

Looking where you live

If you want a job in the area where you already live, there are many ways to identify companies.

- **Think of companies you know.** These may include your present and past employers,

as well as companies that are in the same business. Think also about your employer's customers and suppliers. Do they hire people with your skills? Consider the companies where your friends and relatives work, too.



- **Look around you.** Make note of signs and of trucks that drive by.

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- **Read the ads in local newspapers and magazines.** Look at ads for products or services that interest you. Would you like to work for any of those companies? Look at employment ads too, even if you're not interested in the job. You can always use the companies' names and addresses to write for a job that you do want.
- **Use the telephone yellow pages.** Look for the kind of companies that might need employees with your skills. Use your imagination. If you want to work around cars, look under such listings as "Automobiles," "Mufflers," "Brake Service," "Motorcycles," "Tractors," "Trailers," "Transmissions," "Truck Dealers," "Truck Repair," "Trucking," and so on. If you want to work in personal care, look under such listings as "Hairdressers," "Beauty Salons," "Nail Salons," "Weight Control Services," "Foot Treatment," and so on.
- **Don't ignore small businesses.** Companies with 20 or fewer employees create most of the new jobs in the United States.

Looking in other areas

If you plan to relocate, your local library can help you. You'll find reference books and other resources that list companies in other cities. You can look for a specific town or county, or for a specific industry.

People working at the library can help you find the best resources. Here are some helpful titles:

- *Moody's Industry Review* (a three- to six-page report published every two weeks)
- *Thomas Register of American Manufacturers* (30 volumes with information on 140,000 manufacturing companies, products, and services)
- *The Career Guide: Dun's Employment Opportunities Directory* (with details about more than 5,000 U.S. companies and other job research information. Updated every year.)

Making your company list

As you select companies, add them to your company list. Try to identify a contact person at each company too. This could be someone from your networking list. It could also be the person in charge of the area you want to work in.

The sample below shows what a company list might look like.

Sample Document:
Company List

Company name	Contact person's name	Remarks
The Freedel Corp.	Jack Dewey	production manager
The Wonder Co.		battery maker
Doolittle, Inc.	Marisa Lopez	printed circuits

It's best to treat your company list as you do your networking list. Start it early, and add to it every day.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ started networking list
- ❑ started company list

Chapter 4

Creating a Winning Resume

A resume is a one-page sheet that tells an employer about you and your skills, training, and experience. Making a resume is an important early step for any job search. For some jobs, your resume is your first contact with an employer. It should make employers want to interview you. For other jobs, your first major contact with an employer will be an interview, and you can review your resume to prepare.

Creating a winning resume takes three steps:

1. Gather the information you might need.
2. Decide what information to include and how to present it.
3. Have the resume typed and copied.

Make a Personal Information List

Your first step is to gather information for a personal information list (see pages 34–35).

Answer all the questions that apply to you. Don't worry yet about what an employer will think. No one but you needs to see this list.

After you finish, keep your list to refer to. It will help you write a resume. It will also help you fill out job application forms.

Write the Resume

Resumes can be written in different ways to highlight your strengths. Many people highlight previous work experience. This is a good idea if your experience shows what you have to sell.

But maybe you don't have much work experience. Or maybe you want to change to a different kind of job. Organize your resume so that an employer can quickly see what you have to offer the company.

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Personal Information List

Personal
Full name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone (home): _____
Telephone (work): _____
Social Security number: _____

Work desired
Do you want to work full-time or part-time?
_____
If part-time: _____ days per week or
_____ hours per day
Are you available for evening work?
weekend work? shift work?

Citizenship
Are you a U.S. citizen?
If not, Alien Registration Card number:
_____

Military service
Have you served in the U.S. military? _____
If yes, what branch? _____
Dates: from _____ to _____
Describe your duties at last rank: _____

Education
School: _____
Location: _____
Dates attended: _____
Did you graduate? _____
Subject of study: _____
(List all schools you've attended. Include job training classes if they were at least three days long.)

Convictions
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?____
If yes, give details.

Equipment skills
Machines and equipment you can operate:
_____

References
Name: _____
Relationship: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
(List at least three references. Each reference should be someone who knows your work well but is not a relative.)

Employment
Employer: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Job title: _____
Description of duties: _____
_____
_____
_____

Dates employed: from _____ to _____
Starting salary: _____
Ending salary: _____
Reason for leaving: _____
(List all jobs you've had. List them in order, with the most recent one first.)

Your resume should not mention age, race, religion, family status, or ethnicity. Employers are not supposed to use this information in deciding who to hire. You should also not include any political views or health concerns.

Pages 38–39 show two examples of strong resumes.

When you write your own resume, take into account the lists of skills and knowledge from Chapter 1. Tailor the resume to move you toward your ideal job from Chapter 2. Use any information you need from your personal information list. Write everything that comes to mind. You can always revise the resume later.

Use action words to describe what you've done. This helps highlight your skills and successes.

Not as good:	**Better:**
". . . was in charge of hiring all support staff"	". . . hired all support staff"

Here are examples of words that work well in resumes:

arranged	launched	saved
built	led	served
designed	managed	sold
developed	organized	solved
hired	planned	tested
improved	prepared	trained
increased	reduced	won

RESUME

DO's	DON'Ts
+ Use action verbs, direct words, and short sentences.	– Don't list your hobbies, unless they relate to the job.
+ List first the skills and experience that will most impress a particular employer.	– Don't list references.
+ Make it easy to read. Important information should stand out clearly. Most employers will spend only about a minute reading it the first time.	– Don't list past salaries or what you hope to make.
+ Customize your resume to the jobs you want to apply for.	– Don't give reasons for leaving any job.
+ Stick to one page. Use good quality white or off-white paper.	– Don't include a photo.
+ Be sure it's clean and neat with no spelling errors.	– Don't mention your age, race, religion, family status, nationality, or ethnicity.
+ Check that you've included all your positive qualities and successes.	– Don't be general or unfocused.
+ Send a cover letter if you mail your resume (see Chapter 5).	– Don't handwrite.

Sample Document: Sample Resume 1

Tyrone Thomas 123 Sea Road Uptown, NY 12345 (518) 555-7891

Summary

Energetic, hard-working individual seeking entry-level position with a computer manufacturer. A responsible and reliable person who enjoys contributing to a team effort and creating a good working environment. Has a wide range of manual and office support skills.

Skills and Experience

Maintenance

- Carpenter's helper
  - painted interior walls
  - measured and cut lumber
  - helped with framing
  - operated power tools (saws, drills, sanders)
- Basic home maintenance
  - rewired lamps
  - repaired plumbing and appliances
  - built shelves
- Completed classes in
  - electronics (built a TV scrambler from a circuit board)
  - architectural drafting
  - basic carpentry

Office Support

- Assisted in inventory control and priced merchandise at Robert's Market
- Cashiered at Robert's, computing and handling large sums of money
- Answered phones as needed
- Completed class in marketing, including product development and simulated marketing strategies

Computer Knowledge

- Basic understanding of Windows 95 environment and a variety of software applications

Work History

- June 1996 to present, Stock Clerk/Cashier, Robert's Market, Binghamton, NY
- Summer 1995, Valet Parking Assistant, Melo Country Club, Woodside, NY

Education

- Woodside High School, Woodside, NY, 1996
- Binghamton Junior College, Binghamton, NY. Currently taking night classes in computers and business administration.

Sample Document: Sample Resume 2

Luz Rodriguez
29 Brighton Avenue
Farmingville, NY 11738
(516) 555-2178

Summary

Honest, reliable, and productive worker seeking position as supermarket assistant manager trainee. Nine years' experience in grocery industry as head clerk, checker, and cashier. Excellent reputation with customers as competent, knowledgeable, and helpful.

Work History

1988–present, retail clerk, COOP Supermarket, Woodstock, NY

Customer Service

- Developed a reputation for excellent customer service by
  - smiling and making eye contact
  - greeting customers in a friendly manner and giving them full attention
  - taking time to answer a question or find someone else who could
- Served as product expert, directing customers to
  - unusual spices and ingredients
  - ethnic foods
  - gourmet items
- Increased sales and customer satisfaction in the higher-profit natural foods department by advising customers on bulk alternatives to name-brand items

Supervisory

- As head clerk, managed front end of the store
  - prepared daily schedules for up to 18 clerks to assure best coverage
  - assigned staff to cover peak hours and continuous stocking
- Trained new clerks

Administrative

- Balanced checker's cash drawer with consistently high level of accuracy
- As office cashier for one year
  - accurately balanced books and deposits
  - answered phones
  - prepared daily and monthly sales reports
  - made deposits
  - processed returned checks

Previous Work History

- 1984, buyer's assistant, Capwell's, Hartford, NY
- 1979–1984, manager's assistant, Rusann's Clothing Store, Spokane, WA

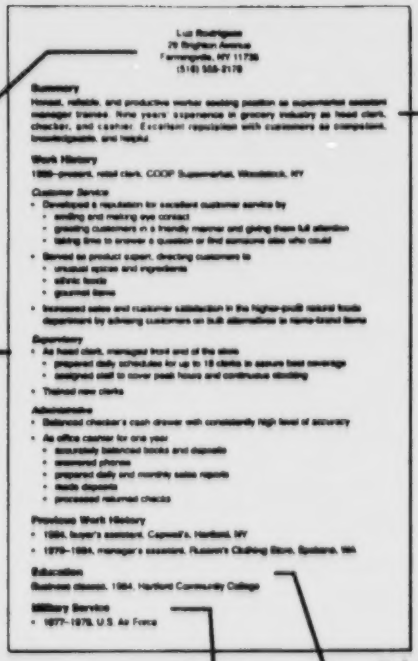
Education

Business classes, 1984, Hartford Community College

Military Service

- 1977–1978, U.S. Air Force

Your name, address, and phone number. Be sure employers can reach you here.



Summary. These two to six lines describe your strengths and job goals. This paragraph is important, so spend some time on it. Call attention to your strongest selling points.

Education. If you've attended high school, don't include your elementary school. If you've gone to college, don't list your high school.

Job history and job strengths. List your previous jobs. For each, include all or some of the following:

- name and location of the company
- what the company does, if it is not well known
- the dates you worked there
- your tasks and responsibilities
- one or two successes (Think back on your success stories.)

If you have not had a job before, list your skills, knowledge, and any training you have had. Focus on things that will impress an employer.

Other information. For example:

- any languages you speak, read, or write other than English
- time spent in the U.S. military
- successes in sports or clubs, if related to the job
- hobbies, if related to the job
- volunteer work

Mention only things that may interest an employer.

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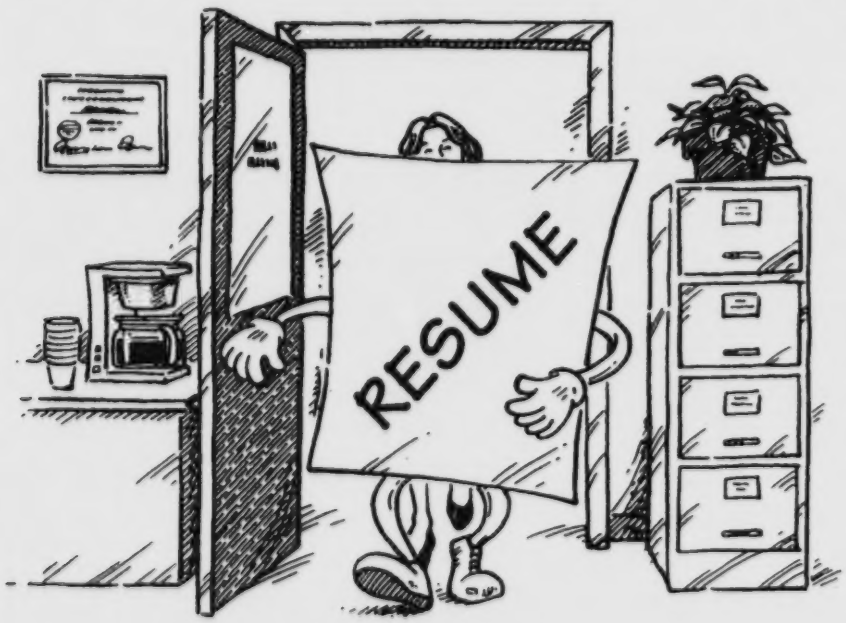
Use the resume diagram on page 40 as a guide. Be sure to include information for each of the five main sections.

After you write your first draft, it's good to wait at least one day, then read your resume again. Have you forgotten anything important? Did you include anything that is not relevant? Change anything you don't like.

Prepare the Final Version

Now you're ready to put the final touches on your resume. These touches make your resume look polished and professional. It will be ready to open doors for you.



The final version of your resume should be typed or word-processed. If you can't do it yourself, have someone else do it for you. It is worth paying for typing if you need to.

Show your resume to one or two people whose judgment you trust. Ask if they would interview you after reading your resume. If they wouldn't, ask why not. See if you can change anything to make your resume work better.

You now have a resume that will give an employer a clear idea of who you are and what you have to sell.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ made personal information list
- ❑ wrote resume
- ❑ had final resume typed

Chapter 5

Cover Letters

For many jobs, you will need to mail your resume. When you send your resume to a company, you should also include a cover letter.

The cover letter is a good chance to sell yourself to an employer. It should be

- brief—no more than one page long
- neatly typed, with no typos or other errors
- tailored to the job you want
- addressed to a person by name
- upbeat and interesting
- on paper that matches your resume, if possible

A good cover letter includes

- your address and phone number, including area code
- the date
- inside address
- a greeting (for example, "Dear Ms. Hernandez,")
- an introduction (Mention the job you're interested in, how you heard about it, and that you think you would do a good job.)
- a body (Show why you would do well in the job, and show your interest in the company.)
- a conclusion (Ask for an interview, and thank the employer.)
- your signature
- the word *Enclosure* (showing that your resume is enclosed)

Suppose someone wants to respond to this newspaper ad:

irm
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and

SECURITY OFFICER
Full-time position. Applicants to be over 20 years old, physically fit, with a valid driver's license and no criminal record. Send resume to Doris Miller, Human Resources, Clark's Department Store, PO Box 123, Upville, FL 34062.

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A cover letter should tell why the applicant would do well in the job.

The ad says that applicants should meet four requirements:

- be over 20 years old
- be physically fit
- have a valid driver's license
- have no criminal record

The cover letter should say that the writer meets all these requirements. It should also mention anything else that would suit the writer for this job.

Page 46 shows an example of a strong cover letter responding to this ad.

Page 47 shows another example of a cover letter. The writer is interested in an office job. He heard about it from someone at the company.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ prepared to write cover letters

Sample Document: Cover Letter 1

Teresa Ippolito
127 North Road
Upville, FL 34062 ← PERSONAL INFORMATION
(407) 555-1357

March 15, 1997 ← DATE

Ms. Doris Miller
Human Resources
Clark's Department Store ← INSIDE ADDRESS
PO Box 123
Upville, FL 34062

Dear Ms. Miller: ← GREETING

I am applying for the job of security officer advertised in today's paper. I believe I meet all the requirements and would do a good job for you. ← INTRODUCTION

I am over 20 years old. I am physically fit and play basketball regularly in a community league. I have no criminal record, and my driver's license is clean. I have been driving for 10 years, two years as a school bus driver.

My former employers will confirm that I am reliable and conscientious. I am available for full-time work on any shift, including evenings or weekends. ← BODY

My resume is enclosed. I'll call you early next week to see if we can arrange an interview. I look forward to meeting with you. Thank you for your consideration. ← CONCLUSION

Sincerely,
Teresa Ippolito ← SIGNATURE
Teresa Ippolito

Enclosure ← NOTE THAT RESUME IS ENCLOSED

Sample Document: Cover Letter 2

John Sewell
947 Millers Lane
Mayville, NH 07421 ← PERSONAL INFORMATION
(603) 555-6776

May 17, 1997 ← DATE

Mr. J.H. Walsh
Director of Human Resources
Quality Corporation ← INSIDE ADDRESS
2121 North Avenue
South Mayville, NH 07407

Dear Mr. Walsh: ← GREETING

Agnes Jones, sales manager at Quality Corporation, suggested that I write to you. She told me that a job for an administrative assistant is open in the sales department. I believe I have the background to do a good job in the position. ← INTRODUCTION

I have been working for five years as an administrative assistant at Classic, Inc. I regularly use word processing, spreadsheet, and database programs and other computer software. I type and format all letters and internal memos. I also manage customer information and prepare invoices. I recently reorganized the customer records and computer files for easier use. I have also trained six staff members in word processing. ← BODY

I feel I would fit in well at Quality Corporation. I am impressed by the way staff at all levels work as a team. I also appreciate how the company supports the community.

I have enclosed a copy of my resume. I would appreciate the chance to meet you for an interview. I will call you early next week to set up an appointment. ← CONCLUSION

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

John Sewell ← SIGNATURE

John Sewell

Enclosure ← NOTE THAT RESUME IS ENCLOSED

Chapter 6

References

Most employers will ask you for references. They want to know how well you did in previous jobs. References are people who can tell them what kind of worker you are.

The best references are people you have worked for: your supervisor, a manager, or the owner of a company. People you have worked for in your last or current job are most important.

Other good choices are people from previous jobs or people who know you in private life. You might pick a neighbor, a teacher, or a

coworker. (It's not a good idea to use relatives, though.) You should plan to have at least three references.

Try to choose people with good things to say about you. Then call them and ask if they are willing to be references.

If they agree, tell them what jobs you are applying for. If you need to, remind them of any of your success stories they could talk about.

When you ask for references, it gets the word out that you are looking for a job. One of your references may pass your name on to other people. Another may tell you about a job opening where she works.

List your references on a separate sheet of paper. Try to use the same paper as you used for your resume and cover letters. Put your name and the word *References* at the top. For each reference, include

- first and last names, spelled correctly
- telephone number and address at which they can be reached. If they may be called at work, give the name of the company.
- position or title
- how the person knows you

Be sure not to include anyone on your reference list unless they've agreed.

Sample Document: Reference List

Francis Chisolm ***References***

William Smolka
Production Manager
Metal Artistry, Inc.
Industrial Parkway East
Springfield, AR 45543
(501) 555-5457

Mr. Smolka was my supervisor for 10 years.

You do not need to give any references until you are asked. This may happen at a job interview. Or you may be asked to supply references before an interview is scheduled.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ lined up references
- ❑ listed references on separate piece of paper

Chapter 7

Want Ads and Employment Agencies

There are four main ways to look for jobs:

- answering ads
- applying to employment agencies
- networking
- using target letters and direct contacts

This chapter talks about the first two ways. These ways have some drawbacks. Competition is intense, and only one-third of all jobs are

advertised. But many people are successful, if they keep trying.

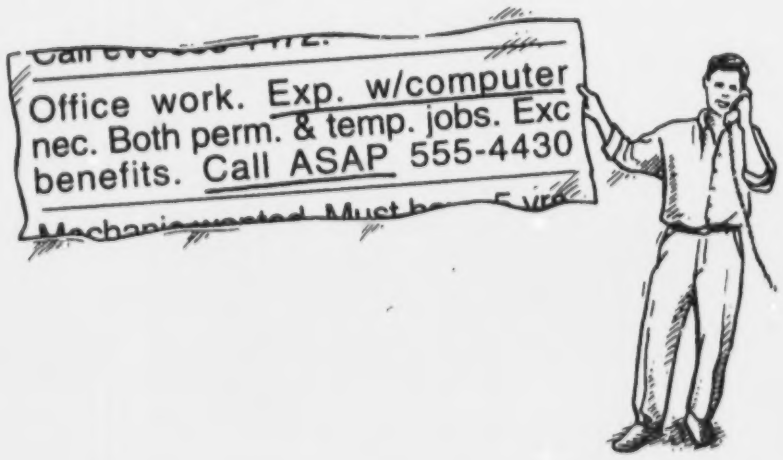
Answering Ads

Many people look in the newspaper for job ads. Don't forget other sources. One is the Internet. More and more jobs are posted there. Many public libraries have computers you can use to check the Internet. Library workers can show you how to find useful job ads.

When you find an ad that interests you, read it to see how to apply. The ad should tell you to call, come in person, or send information.

Applying by phone

Some ads will give a phone number to call. Before you pick up the phone, prepare yourself.



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- Read the ad carefully.
- Underline what the employer wants.
- Have your personal information list or resume handy so you can answer questions.
- Smile—and then pick up the phone.

Here's an example of an ad:

This employer wants experience, your own transportation, and a clean driving record.

Here's an example of how this call might go:

"My name is _____. I am calling about your recent ad for cleaners. Am I talking to the right person?

"I have worked as a cleaner for two years with the XY Company. I have good references. I also have a car and a clean driving record.

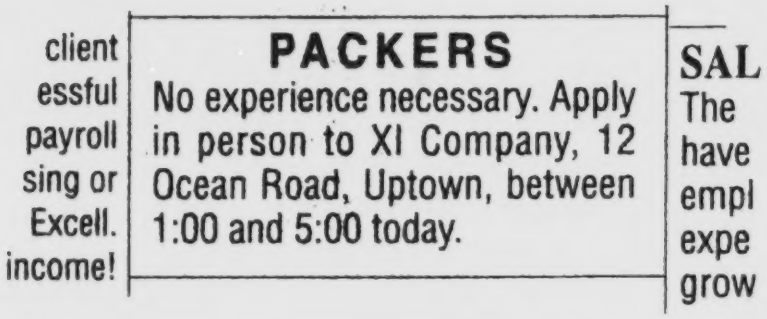
"I'm available immediately. I could stop by at your convenience for an interview. When would be a good time for you?

"Could you tell me the name and address of your company? Who should I ask for when I arrive?"

When you call, some companies may ask you to send your resume. Be sure to ask for the name of the person to send it to, and ask for the correct spelling of the name. Send your resume with a one-page cover letter. (See Chapter 5 on writing cover letters.) Be sure to mention the phone conversation in your letter.

Applying in person

Some ads will ask you to apply in person. Here's an example:



Take your personal information list and your resume with you. It's important to prepare for the meeting. Read Chapter 11 and practice answering interview questions before you go.

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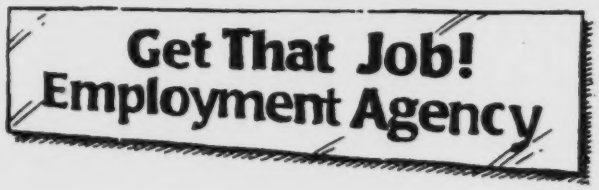
Applying by letter

Some companies ask you to apply in writing. You should send your resume with a cover letter. Include any other materials (such as references) the ad asks for. See Chapter 5 for a sample cover letter answering a newspaper ad.

Employment Agencies and Temporary Work

Many companies use employment agencies. The agencies keep lists of available workers and propose the best ones to companies. The company decides who to hire.



Most employment agencies handle both temporary and permanent jobs. If you are offered a temporary job, you can ask if it might lead to a permanent one.

You can apply to employment agencies by answering their ads in the paper. You can also find employment agencies in the yellow pages of the phone book. (Check headings such as "Employment Agencies" or "Employment

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Contractors—Temporary Help.") Be sure to check your state employment service too. It has job listings for your entire state.

You can call an agency or state office and ask how to apply. You can also contact them by going in person with your resume.

Employment agencies will interview you, and they may test your skills. If a suitable job comes up, they refer you to an employer. The employer makes the hiring decision.

Look for fee-paid employment agencies. This means the agency is paid by the employer. You will not have to pay anything.

Because employment agencies are paid by the employer, they work for the employer. They won't look for a job for you. It's not a good idea to use only agencies in looking for work. If you try some other ideas in this book too, you're more likely to get a job.

If you can't visit an employment agency, you can send a cover letter and your resume. Call first to ask who should get your letter, and the correct spelling of the name.

Page 57 shows a sample letter to an agency.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ began responding to want ads
- ❑ began contacting employment agencies

Sample Document:
Letter to an Employment Agency

Ernest Holcomb
145 School Street
West Valley, PA 19674
(717) 555-9876

November 23, 1997

Ms. Adele Pearson
Pearson Employment Agency
1919 Sixth Street
East Valley, PA 19763

Dear Ms. Pearson:

I am looking for a manufacturing job as a shop floor worker. As you will see from my resume, I have eight years' experience in manufacturing.

My special skills are
- sheet metal work
- operation of punch presses, lathes, and other machines
- tool maintenance
- building maintenance (doors, windows, plumbing, painting, etc.)

I am a fast and reliable worker. I am looking for a stable job but would accept temporary work, especially if it could lead to a permanent position.

My last pay rate was $6.20 per hour.

I would be glad to meet with you at your convenience. I'll call you early next week to arrange a time.

Sincerely,
Ernest Holcomb
Ernest Holcomb

Enclosure

Chapter 8

Networking and Direct Contacts

Many people find jobs through ads and agencies. But many more succeed with the other two strategies:

- networking
- using target letters and direct contacts

Networking

In Chapter 3, you started a networking list. Now, contact some of the people on the list. Start with those you know well. Tell them you

are looking for a job. Ask their advice (but don't expect them to get you a job).

It's helpful to work at expanding your networking circle. You might start a volunteer activity or get more active in the PTA. You can also ask your networking contacts who else you should talk to.

You might say:

- *"You've probably heard I'm looking for work. I have a new resume. I'd like to show it to you and see what you think about it."*
- *"I'm looking for a job. I'm considering the restaurant or hotel industry. I'd like to find out what you know. Can we get together so I can get some advice and ideas from you?"*

You did not ask these people to find you a job. You asked them for advice.

The Networking Meeting

The networking meeting is a more formal kind of networking. From a networking meeting, you want to

- let the person know that you are looking for a job
- get information and advice
- get the names of other people who may be able to help

Here are some questions that a job seeker might ask in a networking meeting:

- Here is my resume. What do you think of it? Do you have any suggestions for improving it? If you read it, would you give me an interview?
- I want to approach some employment agencies. Can you recommend any?
- I'm thinking about working in the _____ industry. Do you think that is a good idea? Do you know any good companies in this industry? Do you know anyone else who may know something about this industry?
- I saw an ad for a job at the _____ company, and I plan to apply. Do you know anything about this company? Do you know anybody who works there?
- Do you think your employer could use someone with my skills? In what kind of position? How should I go about applying? Can you give me an introduction? What is the name of the person I should contact?
- On my job search, I'm answering ads, contacting employment agencies, and using whatever contacts I have. Can you suggest anything else I could do?
- How did you find your job?
- I plan to apply for a job as _____. Do you think this kind of position is right for me, or do you think I should apply for another kind of job?
- Do you know anyone else I could contact for more information? Can I tell that person you referred me?

Your specific questions will vary depending on

- who your contact is
- how well you know your contact
- what information your contact has

In a networking meeting, the conversation can be friendly and informal. But don't use more time than you need.

Target Letters and Direct Contacts

As you know, most jobs are filled without ads or an employment agency. This section talks about how to contact companies directly.

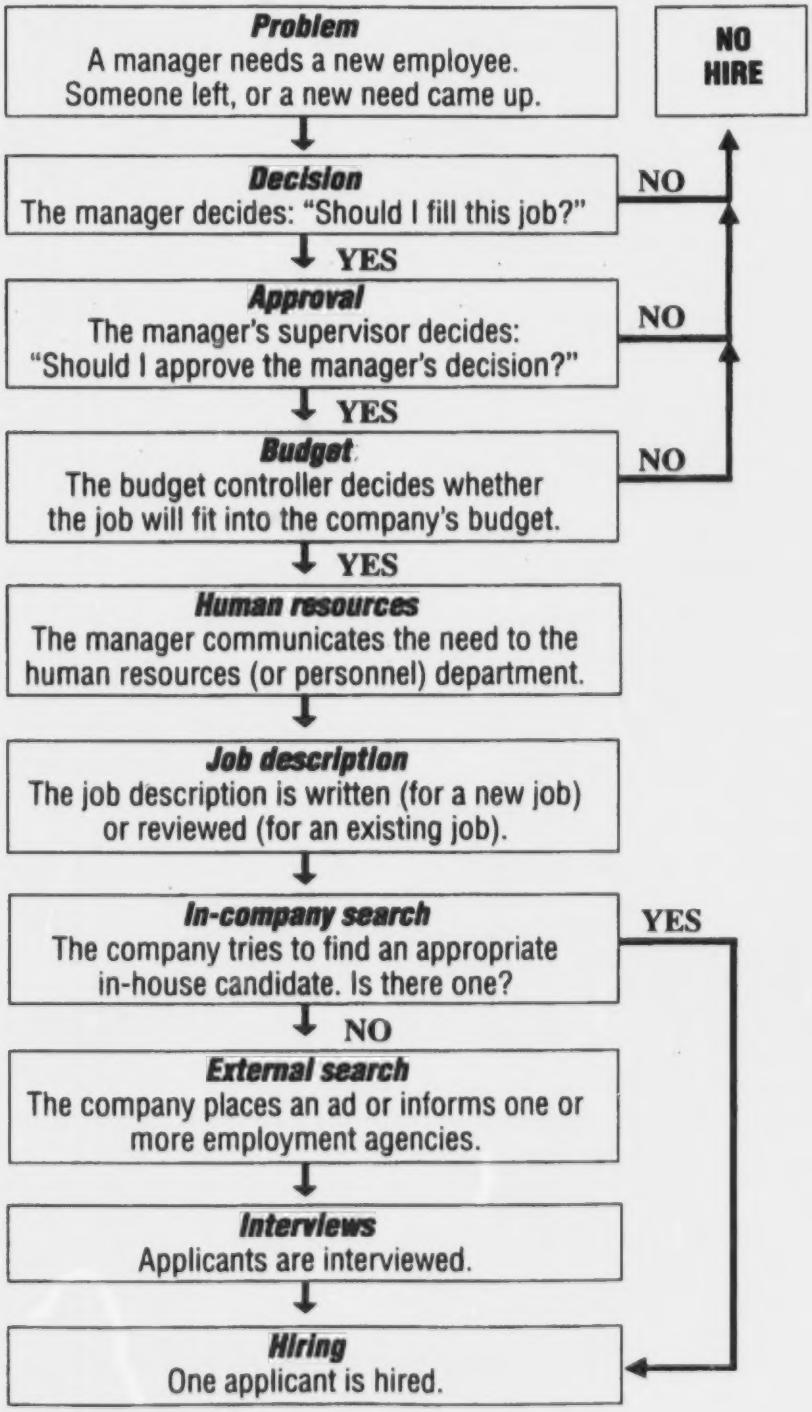
Page 62 shows the steps in the usual hiring process at a large company.

It may take months for a company to get to the external search. And if the in-company search finds a good candidate, the external search may never happen.

When you make direct contact, you want to get to a manager who has the problem described in the flowchart. If the manager sees you as a possible solution, she may skip steps and invite you for an interview.

With this approach, you won't have a lot of competition. In fact, you may be the only candidate.

HIRING FLOWCHART


Problem
A manager needs a new employee. Someone left, or a new need came up.
NO HIRE
Decision
The manager decides: "Should I fill this job?"
NO
YES
Approval
The manager's supervisor decides: "Should I approve the manager's decision?"
NO
YES
Budget
The budget controller decides whether the job will fit into the company's budget.
NO
YES
Human resources
The manager communicates the need to the human resources (or personnel) department.
Job description
The job description is written (for a new job) or reviewed (for an existing job).
In-company search
The company tries to find an appropriate in-house candidate. Is there one?
YES
NO
External search
The company places an ad or informs one or more employment agencies.
Interviews
Applicants are interviewed.
Hiring
One applicant is hired.

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How do you find the manager who has the problem? It's not easy. The best way is through networking.

Another way is through trial and error. Call each company on your company list. Ask the switchboard operator to tell you who manages the department you're interested in. Do not say that you are looking for a job, or the operator will refer you to human resources. You could say something like this:

"I need to write a letter to the head of your _____ division. Could you please give me the correct spelling of the name? What's his correct title? And the address?"

Now you have two choices:

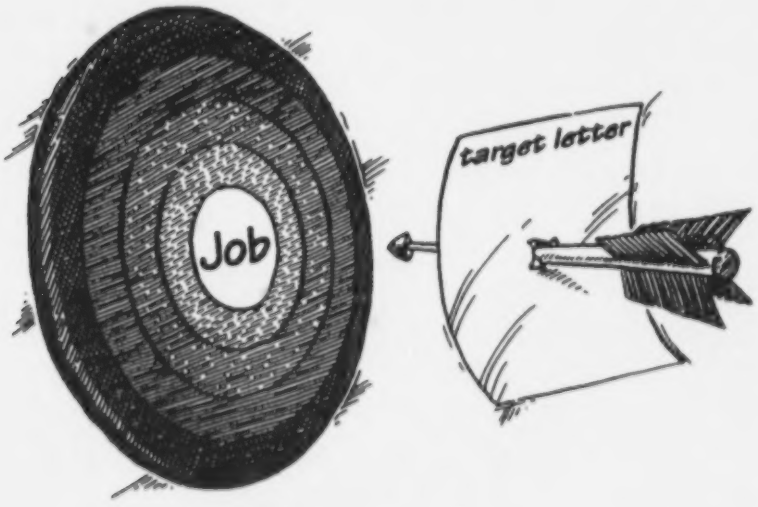
Use the phone

Call the person you found out about. Explain who you are and what you can do. Use a "commercial" that you prepare beforehand to sell your skills and experience. (See page 80.) Ask for an interview. You could say something like this:

"Mr. Miller, my name is Joe Fowler. May I have a moment of your time? I am an experienced mechanic, trained in using most power tools and tooling machines. Would you have any use for somebody with my skills? I can come by with my resume if that would be convenient for you."

Write a letter

This is called a target letter. Send it to the person in charge of the department you want to work for. Do not enclose your resume. (If a resume is included, the letter may be directed to the human resources department. The person you want to reach may never read it.)



A short letter has the best chance of being read. Page 65 shows an example.

Your target letter is important because you will send it out to many different companies. Take some time over it. Keep coming back to it until you are satisfied that this is the best letter you can write.

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Sample Document: Target Letter

Frank Henwood
12 Sea Road
Upville, NY 12045
(345) 555-8990

December 11, 1997

Mr. Jake Smith
Jake's Auto Repair
1122 Pearl Street
Downtown, NY 12433

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am an experienced auto mechanic and am looking for a new position. I have training and expertise in maintenance and repair of foreign and domestic cars and trucks.

I worked for six years at Auto City. I performed state inspections and all kinds of repairs. I also often dealt with customers. I was laid off when the company downsized.

My responsibilities included supervising the work of two other mechanics. I also reorganized our parts inventory system. As a result, there were fewer delays, the shop saved money, and the customers were more satisfied.

I would appreciate having a chance to talk with you. I'll give you a call next week to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

Frank Henwood

Frank Henwood

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Limit how many target letters you send out each week, because you'll want to follow up on all of them. Five to seven days after sending each letter, call the person on the phone.

This phone call is your key to success. When managers read a letter, they may be interested but too busy to deal with it, so they put the letter aside. But if you call, the manager may be happy to talk to you and keep you in mind for any openings, now or later.

When you call the person you addressed the letter to, say something like this:

"Mr. Smith, this is Frank Henwood. I wrote you a letter a few days ago, offering my services as a mechanic. Did you receive my letter? Would it be possible for me to come by and meet you?"

You cannot always expect to reach the person you want with your first call. You may have to call a busy person three or more times. But do not give up—keep at it.

Do not talk to anybody else. Just say something like this:

"I wrote him a letter a few days ago and wanted to make an appointment. I think I have to talk to him directly. When do you think is a good time to reach him?"

Then try to call again. Your goal is to be invited for an interview or asked to submit a resume.

Do not get discouraged. The next try may be the successful one!

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ began talking to networking contacts
- ❑ wrote target letter
- ❑ began sending out target letters
- ❑ started making follow-up phone calls

Chapter 9

Staying Organized

You may have to make 100 contacts or more before you find a job. It's a good idea to follow a plan and keep records of your contacts, letters, and phone calls. If you are organized and stay on top of the facts, it will make a good impression on employers.

Keeping Records

You'll want to keep written records for all your networking contacts and for every company you research.

For each contact, be sure to keep track of

- the contact's name
- what was said
- when the conversation took place
- any letters you or your contact wrote
- any follow-up you need to do

The best way is to take notes. Many people find index cards the most practical. You can carry them with you and make notes right after a meeting.

Pages 70–71 show two examples of index cards. In the "Action" column, *P* means phone call and *M* means meeting.

A Weekly Job Search Plan

A job search plan will also help you stay organized. And it will help you keep up the pace of your job search.

How much time you can spend on your job search depends on other things in your life. Only you can decide how much time you can put into your job search.

A sample weekly plan appears on page 72. It shows a good level of activity for someone who can look for work full-time. A job seeker might reach this level two or three weeks after starting the job search.

Sample Document: Networking File Card

Front side

Chang, Barbara
Hilltop Apartments, Apt. 4-A, Terre Haute, IN 50301
Home phone: unlisted

Personnel Manager
ABC Company
1329 River Blvd. Terre Haute, IN 50312
Business phone: (812) 555-3136

Remarks:

Back side

Date	Action	Summary	Next step
2/10	P	Agreed to see me.	2/15, PM
2/15	M	30-minute meeting. Gave me two names; made file cards for them.	Write thank-you letter.

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Sample Document:
Company File Card

Front side

ABC Company
1329 River Blvd., Terre Haute, IN 50312
(812) 555-3100 (switchboard)
Important people:
Chang, Barbara, Personnel Manager
Sumner, John, Production Manager
Main products:
circuit boards
Other information

Back side

Date	Action	Contacts	What happened	Next action
9/11	P	John Sumner	Will see me.	Call 9/16.
9/16	P	John Sumner	No decision yet; will call me next week.	Call 9/27.

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Weekly Plan for an Active Job Search

Phone calls

- ❑ for networking meetings 5
- ❑ to target companies 10
- ❑ to employment agencies 3
- ❑ to answer ads in newspapers and other listings 10

Total 28

Letters

- ❑ to answer ads in newspapers and other listings 5
- ❑ target letters 10
- ❑ thank-you letters after networking meetings or interviews 5

Total 20

Meetings

- ❑ networking meetings 3
- ❑ job interviews 4

Total 7

Total activities for the week 55

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ set up networking records
- ❑ set up company contact records
- ❑ made weekly job search plan

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Chapter 10

The Application Form

When you apply for a job, many companies ask you to fill in an application form. This gives them much of the basic information they need about you. Every company has a different form, but most of the questions are the same.

The information you need for an application form is on the personal information list you created in Chapter 4. Whenever you visit an employer, take your personal information list with you. That way, you'll have all the information you need.

75

Messy forms make a bad impression. Try to get two copies of any application form. If you can, take the form home and bring it back later. Take the time to complete the form carefully.

Use one copy of the form for a first draft. Do it in pencil, so you can make corrections. Then copy the answers onto the second form.

When you fill in an application form, be sure to do the following:

- Print neatly in blue or black ink.
- Read the whole form carefully before you begin. Read it again after you finish to make sure it's complete.
- If you don't understand a question, ask the person who gave you the form to explain.
- Double-check names, dates, telephone numbers, and addresses you write.

Answer every question on an application form. If a question doesn't apply to you, write "Does not apply." If you want to explain an answer, write "Will discuss in interview."

Remember that the information you give may be checked. If you give false answers, you may not be hired. If you get the job, you could lose it if the employer finds out later that you didn't tell the truth.

Illegal Questions

Some questions are illegal. You don't have to answer questions on these topics on an application form or in an interview:

- your age or date of birth
- your race
- arrests (An employer *can* ask if you've ever been convicted of a crime, though.)
- number of children or childcare arrangements
- handicaps
- your marital status (single, married, separated, or divorced)
- your religion or what religious holidays you observe
- your sex
- your sexual orientation

Chapter 11

The Job Interview

Your contacts, cover letter, and resume help you get an interview. An interview helps you get the job. You'll want to have good interview skills and prepare ahead of time.

The Basics of the Job Interview

In an interview, an employer wants to find out if you can do the job and if you'll fit in. You want to find out if you like the job and can do it. You also want to make a good impression.

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It's a good idea to practice for an interview. You can do this by yourself or with someone else. Practice answering the questions you might be asked. Some common interview questions are on pages 82–83.

Basic Guidelines for Interviews

Here are some important guidelines for interviews. Following them will help you make a good impression.

- Be on time.
- Go by yourself.
- Be confident about your skills, training, and experience.
- Bring with you your resume, personal information list, and other documents you've been asked for.
- Prepare yourself well for every interview. What do you know about the job? What do you know about the company? The more you know in advance, the better your chances are of getting the job.
- Avoid tight, revealing clothes and too much perfume or cologne.

Do

Don't

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- Dress suitably for the job—the way you would dress for work or a little better. Don't overdo it. For example, don't wear a suit and tie to apply for a construction job.
- Personal grooming is important. Your clothes and hair should be neat and clean. Your shoes should be polished.
- Don't smoke. Don't chew gum or tobacco.
- Don't ramble. Give short, precise answers, not long explanations. Stick to the topic. (When you practice, keep your answers to two minutes or shorter. But don't look at your watch in the interview.)
- Talk about yourself only to show how you could do the job and benefit the company.
- Listen carefully before answering questions. And listen carefully to the answers to your questions.
- Ask questions about the job, not about pay and benefits. Don't talk about pay and benefits unless you are offered a job or are asked a question about them. Then, don't ask for more pay than the job is worth.
- Never bad-mouth your former employers or supervisors. The interviewer may think that you are a difficult person. Be positive, even if you have bad feelings.

- Don't make excuses for yourself in a previous job.
- Keep a positive attitude. Smile.

The first impression you make is very important. These things can help:

- Come through the door with your head up, look at the interviewer, and introduce yourself.
- Be ready for a handshake, but don't hold out your hand. The interviewer may not like to shake hands.
- If you do shake hands, do so firmly.
- Wait until you're asked before sitting.
- Make good eye contact with the interviewer during the interview.
- Be friendly but professional. Keep a businesslike attitude.

Your "Commercial"

Interviewers often start an interview by saying, "Tell me something about yourself."

This is your chance to sell yourself.

When you have the chance to talk freely, don't simply repeat your resume. Focus on your strong points.

Sample Document: "Commercial"

JOB:

"**I am a** carpenter and became a specialist in building maintenance."

SKILLS:

"**I am good at** constantly checking on buildings and doing all the repairs, such as plumbing, hanging drywall, carpentry, and fixing locks and lights. I am also experienced in supervising outside contractors."

EXPERIENCE:

"**In my last job** I maintained two buildings and ensured that a major repair of the roofs was finished by the contractors on time and under budget."

CHARACTER:

"**I am** responsible, reliable, and easy to work with. I've always had pleasant relationships with my superiors, my coworkers, and the contractors. I can be firm when necessary."

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A good way to do this is to mention four points: the job you can do, your skills, your experience, and your character. You can also talk about your education or other topics. But mention only things that could be important in your job.

Page 81 shows a sample "commercial."

It is a good idea to write your "commercial" and practice it ahead of time. It should take one minute to two minutes—no longer.

Questions You May Be Asked

During the interview, the interviewer will ask you questions about yourself or about other jobs you've had. Some of the questions are not easy to answer. You need to prepare and practice clear answers before you go to a job interview.

Common interview questions

- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Why are you the best candidate for the job?
- What are your three greatest strengths?
- In your career so far, what do you think is your greatest success?

- How would other people describe you?
- If I called your last supervisor and asked for a recommendation, what would she say?
- Tell me about your past successes.
- What did you like most about your last job?
- What are your goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?
- How do you get along with your coworkers?
- Do you work well under pressure?

Dealing with Difficult Questions

In some interviews, you may be asked difficult questions. Try to predict what questions might be difficult for you. Decide ahead of time how you will answer them.

Never lie—you could lose the job if you do. But try to deal with these questions in the most positive way you can.

Pages 84–86 list some examples of difficult questions and possible answers.

Question:

"Why did you leave your last job?"

Possible Answers:

- *"The company downsized, and I was laid off."*
- *"I wanted to find a position with more room for growth."*
- If you were fired for personal reasons, try to put a positive spin on it, for example, *"The department was reorganized and my duties changed. I wanted to find a job where I could work more independently."* Never say "I couldn't stand my boss" or "I didn't get along with my coworkers." Don't blame someone else if you had job troubles.

Question:

"Why did they choose to lay you off and not someone else?"

Possible Answers:

- *"I'd been there the shortest time."*
- *"My whole department was eliminated."*
- *"They only kept people who had experience in sales, which I didn't."*

Question:

"What are your weaknesses?"

Possible Answer:

- See Chapter 1. Try to mention a weakness

that's also a strength, for example, *"I am sometimes too fussy about details. On the other hand, my boss could always be sure that my work was carefully done."*

Question:

"You were with the same company for twenty-one years. Can you still adapt to new situations?"

Possible Answer:

- *"There were many changes in the company during this time. In the last six years I had four supervisors, and the company had two owners. I always adapted well."*

Question:

"You don't have quite enough experience in some areas."

Possible Answer:

- *"I'm a fast learner. I'm willing and eager to learn. If there are any classes you think I should take, I'll be happy to."*

Question:

"How much do you want to earn?"

Possible Answer:

- Try not to give a direct answer. Instead, try to find out what they are willing to pay: *"What have you planned to pay for this job?"*

Question:

"What did you dislike about your last job?"

Possible Answer:

- Use the list you made in Chapter 1. Mention only one thing, and make it short. For example: *"They didn't have enough work to keep me busy."*

Question:

"You left your last job nine months ago. Why didn't you find a job sooner?"

Possible Answers:

Do not give the impression that you have been doing nothing. Say something like:

- *"I've been working hard to find a good job, but the job market is very tight."*
- *"I relocated, and it's taken some time to find possible jobs in a new city."*

Questions You May Want to Ask

After interviewers ask their questions, most will ask if you have any questions. If this doesn't happen, at the end of the interview you can say, "May I ask you some questions?" You want to gather enough information to decide if you want the job.

It's best to prepare good questions ahead of time. Your questions may change from interview to interview. (See page 88 for some examples.)

Write down your questions so you don't forget any. Don't be afraid to take out your notes during the interview. It shows the interviewer that you came well prepared.

The End of the Interview

The interviewer may not give you an answer on the spot because the company wants to interview other candidates. If you're told "We'll let you know," ask, "When can I expect to hear from you?" Make a note of the answer.

Before you leave, thank the person who interviewed you. Be sure to get the names (with correct spellings) of the interviewer and anyone else who helped you.

Sample Questions to Ask in an Interview

- Can you tell me more about the company?
- Is this a new position, or would I replace someone?
- What exactly are the job duties?
- What are the working hours? Will there be overtime?
- Who would my supervisor be?
- Can I do anything to prepare myself for the job before starting?

Sample Questions to Ask When You're Offered a Job

- What have you planned to pay for this job?
- Will you cover my health insurance? How about my family?
- Do you have a retirement plan? Can I join it right away? What would I contribute?
- When would you like me to start?

After the Interview

Write a thank-you letter to the interviewer the same day or early the next day. Also write to anyone else who helped you. Say that you are still interested in the job. Take this chance to mention your strong points again.

Page 90 shows a sample thank-you letter.

If you don't hear from the company, follow up with a phone call. Be friendly and businesslike. Say something like, *"I spoke to you about the _____ position last week. You thought you'd have an answer for me by yesterday. I wanted to check on the status of the position."*

If the company hasn't decided yet, ask when they expect to decide. Follow up again on that date if you haven't heard.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ prepared my "commercial"
- ❑ have a copy of my resume
- ❑ have my personal information list
- ❑ prepared answers for commonly asked interview questions
- ❑ have a list of questions I plan to ask
- ❑ have other materials I need (letter of recommendation, a diploma, sample work from other job, Resident Alien card, etc.)

Sample Document: Thank-You Letter

Laura Fitzgerald
200 West Lake Street
Hicksville, NY 11801

June 14, 1997

Mr. Howard Osada
Fairmount Industries
58 East Avenue
Astoria, NY 11160

Dear Mr. Osada,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to talk with me about the office manager position today. I was happy to discuss how I would fit into the team at Fairmount Industries.

I was struck by how I'd be able to help with keeping the office organized and the work flowing. My experience in juggling priorities and working under pressure would be useful in such a busy company. I feel sure I could be an asset to Fairmount Industries.

You mentioned that you expect to make a decision next week. I look forward to speaking with you then. Please feel free to call me if you have any more questions.

Sincerely,

Laura Fitzgerald

Laura Fitzgerald

Chapter 12

Getting the Best Pay and Conditions

If you are offered a job, now is your chance to discuss pay, benefits, and working conditions.

Sometimes there is nothing to discuss or negotiate. For some jobs, the company tells you what your duties, pay, and benefits will be. You take it or leave it.

But on many jobs there is room for some negotiation. When an employer really wants you, he may be willing to improve on the first offer.

It is worth asking for better pay or benefits, but don't ask for more than the job is worth. Keep in mind that your requests must make sense for the employer, or you won't get them. See page 93 for an example.

Here is a checklist of points to consider:

Possible negotiation points

Money

- salary/pay
- commissions
- bonus

Other Benefits

- insurance: medical, disability, dental, life
- vacation
- retirement plan
- educational programs

Relocation

- moving cost
- temporary housing
- help in selling your home
- bridge loan to transfer mortgage

Job Description

- place of work
- supervisor
- duties

What if you don't know what the job is worth? Maybe someone on your networking list would know better.

Not likely to work	More likely to work
"I want more money."	"I think with my experience I am worth a bit more. You won't have to train me, and I'll be productive from day one. Don't you think that's worth $____ more?"

Here's a sample story. Maria was offered a job. She was told that she would make $7.20 per hour and that she could start next Monday. Then she began her negotiation:

Maria: *There is one point I would like to clarify. Could you explain the health insurance plan? Is my family included?*

Supervisor: *You will be covered right away, but your family only after three months.*

Maria: *This is really a problem for me. It would be difficult for me to find my family coverage for the next three months. Can you cover them from day one if I pay a part of the premium?*

Supervisor: *I think that should be possible, but you may have to pay the whole premium. I'll talk with Human Resources about it.*

Maria: *Thank you very much. Could we do this right now?*

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In the end, Maria got what she needed: family insurance right away.

Job Search Progress Checklist

- ❑ prepared negotiation points

Chapter 13

Tips for Your New Job

Congratulations! The work of looking for a job is over for now. Here are some tips for getting off to a good start in your new job.

Be modest.

Follow the company's rules and procedures, even if you don't understand them. If you have new ideas, share them tactfully. Try not to criticize your coworkers.

Use your first weeks well.

Your boss and coworkers will give you time to learn your new job. Ask lots of questions. It's better to ask questions than to make mistakes.

Don't be too afraid of mistakes.

Honest mistakes are part of learning. Don't be too hard on yourself. Admit your mistakes (and be sure not to repeat them).

Get to know key people.

Your boss and coworkers are key people for you. But other people in the company can also be key to your job. Get to know everyone who can help you do your work.

Don't expect to stay forever.

There is no job security anymore. A takeover, a failing product, or another event may force the company to let you go.

Keep your eyes open for job possibilities. Make sure you stay employable. Keep up with new developments.

Keep a list of your successes at work, big and small. Add to it each week. This list will give you a head start in planning your next job search.

A Quick and Easy Guide

- Do you need a job or want to change jobs?
- Do you know what you have to offer an employer?
- Do you know the right way to write a resume and fill out an application form?
- How can you make a good impression at a job interview?

The answers to these questions and many more are in this easy-to-read guide. There are more people looking for jobs than jobs available. Planning your job search by following the steps in this guide can put you in the lead. This book will share with you the secrets of getting the job you want.

Jurg Oppliger *has drawn from his vast experience as an employer and a career counselor to put together this step-by-step guide to getting a job.*

Get That Job!

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ACTIVITY 1 Use with Chapter 1, pages 10–11.

I Like / I Don't Like

Think about your current job and jobs you had in the past. List job features that you like and that you do not like. Be specific.

Tasks

I like to _____

I don't like to _____

Qualities of My Supervisor

I like _____

I don't like _____

Level of Responsibility

I like _____

I don't like _____

Salary and Benefits

I like _____

I don't like _____

Working Conditions (hours, location, working alone or with others, etc.)

I like _____

I don't like _____

Opportunity to Advance

I like _____

I don't like _____

ACTIVITY 2 Use with Chapter 1, pages 14–15.

Skills Inventory

List your skills. Try to list at least one skill in each category. List more wherever possible. Use strong action verbs. Explain how the skills are important in a job.

Skills from Current or Past Work Experience

I can _____

These skills are important because _____

I can also _____

These skills are important because _____

Skills from School or Training

I can _____

These skills are important because _____

I can also _____

These skills are important because _____

Skills from Volunteer Activities

I can _____

These skills are important because _____

Skills from Hobbies, Recreation, or Clubs

I can _____

These skills are important because _____

Skills from Home and Family Responsibilities

I can _____

These skills are important because _____

ACTIVITY 3 Use with Chapter 2, pages 20–21.

My Ideal Job

Use your answers to Activities 1 and 2. Think about what features you want in a job. Think about what features you need, such as hours or benefits. Write a description of your ideal job.

Job Description

I want a job in the _____ field. I want a job in which I can

_____

I want the chance to _____

because _____

The kind of company I'm looking for is _____

Job Conditions

I would like to work in a place that is _____

I'd like to work the hours of _____ because _____

_____

I'm hoping for coworkers who _____

Pay and Benefits

I want to make a salary of _____, but I need to make at least _____. I want a job that offers

these benefits: _____

I need them because _____

Other Issues

I want a job in which I don't have to _____

because _____

These things are also important to me: _____

ACTIVITY 4 Use with Chapter 3, pages 26–27.

Build Your Network

List your key networking contacts. Include the person's full name. Record the best phone number to call the person. Mark it *H* for "home" or *W* for "work." On the *Notes* line, list such things as the person's company, job, or title, or who referred you to that person. For each contact, write at least one key question you want to ask.

1. **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

   Notes: _____

   Question: _____

2. **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

   Notes: _____

   Question: _____

3. **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

   Notes: _____

   Question: _____

4. **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

   Notes: _____

   Question: _____

5. **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

   Notes: _____

   Question: _____

6. **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

   Notes: _____

   Question: _____

ACTIVITY 5 Use with Chapter 4, pages 33–35.

Personal Information Form

Fill out this form. Answer all the questions that apply to you. Answer as completely as possible. Use this information when you write your resume and when you fill out application forms.

Personal Data

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ (home) _____ (work)

Social Security number: _____

U.S. citizen? _____ Yes _____ No If no, Alien Registration number: _____

U.S. military service? _____ Yes _____ No If yes, what branch? _____

Dates: From _____ To _____ Last rank _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, give details: _____

Any physical or mental disabilities that would prevent you from performing a job?

_____ Yes _____ No If yes, explain: _____

Machines and equipment you can operate: _____

_____

Work desired: _____ Full-time _____ Part-time

If part-time: _____ days per week _____ hours per day

Available for: _____ Evening work _____ Weekend work _____ Shift work

Willing to work overtime if necessary? _____ Yes _____ No

When are you available to start work? _____

Education and Training

School: _____ Location: _____

Dates attended: _____ Graduated? _____ Yes _____ No

Degree or certificate: _____ Subject(s) studied: _____

School: _____ Location: _____

Dates attended: _____ Graduated? _____ Yes _____ No

Degree or certificate: _____ Subject(s) studied: _____

Work Experience

Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ Dates employed: _____

Job title: _____ Supervisor: _____

Duties: _____

Salary: Starting _____ Ending _____ Reason for leaving: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ Dates employed: _____

Job title: _____ Supervisor: _____

Duties: _____

Salary: Starting _____ Ending _____ Reason for leaving: _____

References

Name: _____ Phone number(s): _____

Name: _____ Phone number(s): _____

Name: _____ Phone number(s): _____

ACTIVITY 6 Use with Chapter 4.

Resume Checklist

Check your resume. Have you followed these guidelines? If part of your resume needs more work, revise it. Then check the resume again.

Yes	Needs Work	
____	____	**1.** Put name, address, phone number(s), and e-mail address (if you have one) at top.
____	____	**2.** Use action verbs and precise words.
____	____	**3.** Organize information so that it is easy to read.
____	____	**4.** Summarize key strengths and career objective or job goal.
____	____	**5.** List work experiences, skills, and education or training.
____	____	**6.** List licenses or certificates related to the job you want.
____	____	**7.** Highlight important qualifications related to the job you want.
____	____	**8.** Give details of major accomplishments. Include numbers if possible.
____	____	**9.** Customize information to fit a particular job.
____	____	**10.** Include relevant skills from activities outside of paid work.
____	____	**11.** Include job-related awards or honors.
____	____	**12.** Include all important information, but keep it brief.
____	____	**13.** Don't include salary requirements or past salaries.
____	____	**14.** Don't list personal data such as age, sex, or marital status.
____	____	**15.** Carefully check spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
____	____	**16.** Make sure all information is accurate.
____	____	**17.** Keep resume to one page if possible, two at most.
____	____	**18.** Type resume on white or off-white paper.

ACTIVITY 7 Use with Chapter 5.

A Winning Cover Letter

Use a cover letter you have already written, or write a letter applying for one of the jobs in Activity 9. Check your letter. Have you followed these guidelines? If part of your letter needs more work, revise it. Then check the letter again.

Yes	Needs Work	
_____	_____	**1.** Address the letter to a specific person, including title, if possible.
_____	_____	**2.** State the position you are applying for.
_____	_____	**3.** Tell how you learned about the position you are applying for.
_____	_____	**4.** Briefly state why you are interested in the job.
_____	_____	**5.** Customize your letter to fit the job you are applying for.
_____	_____	**6.** Highlight one or two strong points from your experience.
_____	_____	**7.** Briefly show that your qualifications meet the job requirements.
_____	_____	**8.** Stress what you can offer the employer.
_____	_____	**9.** Don't include salary requirements.
_____	_____	**10.** Don't mention gaps in employment or other negatives.
_____	_____	**11.** Request an interview, and tell the person how to contact you.
_____	_____	**12.** Say that you will follow up with a phone call. Then do it.
_____	_____	**13.** Organize your information in no more than five brief paragraphs.
_____	_____	**14.** Use strong, precise wording.
_____	_____	**15.** Keep your letter brief, on one page.
_____	_____	**16.** Type the letter on paper that matches your resume.
_____	_____	**17.** State that your resume is enclosed. Put *Enclosure* at the bottom of the letter.
_____	_____	**18.** Carefully check spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

ACTIVITY 8 Use with Chapter 7.

Where to Start Looking

Identify sources of job information that you can use. Write the information on this form. Continue your list on separate paper if necessary.

Newspapers (classified or help wanted ads)

Name of newspaper(s): _____

Section(s) in classified ads to check (Sales, Health Care, Computers, etc.):

_____

Professional or Trade Publications or Newsletters

Name of publication(s): _____

Available at: _____

Government Agencies (state labor department, city or county job agencies, etc.)

Agency: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Hours: _____

Library Resources (job listings, phone books, computers for Internet access, etc.)

Library: _____ Address: _____

Resources: _____

School Placement Office (bulletin boards, counseling for students or alumni, etc.)

School: _____ Address: _____

Resources: _____

Bulletin Boards (in government offices, union offices, companies, stores, etc.)

Location: _____

Location: _____

ACTIVITY 9 Use with Chapter 7, pages 12-13.

Responding to Job Ads

Read each job ad. Answer the questions that follow it. On separate paper, write two questions you would ask to get more information about that job.

> **DATA ENTRY Approx. 20-25 hrs./wk. $10.00/hr.**
> **Some experience pref. Must type 35 wpm.**
> **Call Mrs. Evans, 555-9212 8:30-4 to schedule an interview.**

1. What do the following abbreviations mean?

   a. Approx. _____ c. pref. _____

   b. hrs./wk. _____ d. wpm _____

2. Is this a full-time or part-time job? What tells you that? _____

3. a. What qualifications does the job require? _____

   b. What qualifications are desired? _____

4. What should you do to apply for this job? _____

> **ENGINEERING DEPT. A/C Tech opening. Elec. knowledge a must; A/C certificate a plus. Some evenings and weekends. Fax resume and salary req. ASAP to 555-6398. EOE**

1. What do the following abbreviations mean?

   a. DEPT. _____ d. Elec. _____

   b. A/C _____ e. req. _____

   c. Tech _____ f. EOE _____

2. a. What qualifications does the job require? _____

   b. What qualifications are desired? _____

3. What should you do to apply for this job? _____

4. If you applied, what would you say about salaries? _____

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ACTIVITY 10 Use with Chapter 11, pages 80–82.

Tell Me Something about Yourself

Prepare to tell an interviewer about yourself. Complete the sentences. If you wish, add other information that can impress an employer. Then practice saying this description out loud.

Job

I am a(n) _____

I want to _____

Skills

I can _____

I know how to _____

I am also good at _____

Experience

In my last job I _____

My responsibilities included _____

I have also _____

Character

I am _____

In my relationships with other people, I _____

Goals

I am applying for this job because _____

I believe I can contribute to the company by _____

I hope that I can _____

ACTIVITY 11 Use with Chapter 11, pages 82–83.

Interview Questions

Write your answers to these common interview questions. Then practice saying them out loud.

1. What are your strengths?

_____

2. How would your last supervisor describe your work?

_____

3. What do you feel is your greatest success?

_____

4. What did you like most about your last job?

_____

5. How do you get along with your coworkers?

_____

6. What were your major responsibilities in your last job?

_____

7. How can you contribute to this company?

_____

8. What are your goals? What do you want to be doing in five years?

_____

9. Tell me about your hobbies, any volunteer work you do, and so on.

_____

ACTIVITY 12 Use with Chapter 11, pages 83–86.

Difficult Questions

Write your answers to these interview questions, which may be difficult. Then practice saying them out loud.

1. What are your weaknesses?

_____

2. Why did you leave your last job? *or* Why do you want to leave your current job?

_____

3. You don't seem to have much experience/training in this field.

_____

4. You've changed jobs a lot, haven't you? *or* You've been out of work a long time.

_____

5. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

_____

6. Have you ever been fired or laid off from a job? Why?

_____

7. How much do you expect to earn?

_____

8. How well did you get along with your last supervisor?

_____

9. What responsibilities do you have that might interfere with your work?

_____

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